

"You sleep a the veely veel?" said he.

"Well, not very well," said I; for he was so good, I hated to tell him a lie. I asked him to kindly send me one of the Fathers who could speak English, and they all seemed to speak it freely.

"Oh," said he, "me no understand English; me speak a the Basque."

Exit, the Brother; enter, the Father. After the conventional exchange of courtesies, I ventured to ask him for an explanation of the alarm-bell and the mysterious noise, and he said with a smile:

"Oh, that was the monks chanting 'Matins and Lauds,' which they rise every night at one o'clock to recite. I hope it did not disturb you."

"Well, not much," I replied.

The explanation seemed satisfactory so far, but next night, not later than 8 p. m., I heard a more terrible noise—evidently a number of them were whipping some real or supposed offender. Making inquiries also about this the following morning, I was told it was the taking of the Discipline.

"What is that?" I asked; "flogging somebody?"

"Well, yes," he said, "somebody, but not some other body. In the infliction of this particular punishment, the master and slave are one and the same individual; each one whips himself."

"What for?"

"Well, to subdue and mortify the flesh."

"Oh!" I said, "I think that is foolish."

He replied: "But the wisdom of men is foolishness before God, as St. Paul says; and, as the same apostle says, he chastised his body and brought it into subjection, lest while he preached to others he might himself become a cast-away. You," said he to me, "pretend to be an apostle and to preach the doctrine of St. Paul, and yet you don't

know this! Does not your doctrine seem to be more according to the flesh than the spirit?"

The second day passed, but on the third day I was more perplexed than ever. Having strolled into the church on hearing some service going on, I was astonished. After the monks had occupied their places in the stalls, the sisters the places reserved for them, and the rest of the congregation had assembled, a number of the Brothers entered the sanctuary from the vestry-room. They marched slowly and in single file, escorting or guarding one who appeared more conspicuous and remarkable than the rest. His eyes downcast, his head shaved, his face pale and emaciated, and wearing an unutterable look of sadness, he presented altogether a woe-begone appearance. I thought at the time he must be either a refractory member of the community, an insane Brother, or else an escaped lunatic or convict. And this, I thought, at least unravels the mystery about the whipping, throwing a new light upon all the strange proceedings. Here was one of the unfortunate victims, and now he was going to the place of execution! Finally the poor fellow weakened, and, giving way altogether, fell prostrate on his hands and face, murmuring some inaudible words, which I supposed were uttered in protestation of his innocence.

Having asked for an explanation, as usual, I was informed that it was the solemn profession of one of the monks, and, indeed, one of the happiest events in conventional life. I told the Father what I had supposed this Brother to be, and he replied that he was neither a bad member, nor a lunatic, nor an escaped convict, but one who delivers himself up, of his own free will and choice, to perpetual imprisonment in the Lord, and *vinctus in Domino*, binds himself with a precious chain of three golden links—poverty, chastity, and obedience.